

Recent acquisitions

Film Australia has recently acquired a number of documentaries for distribution. *Troubled Waters*, produced by Jo-anne McGowan and directed by Ruth Balint, investigates the human and financial costs of Australia's current border protection policies by focusing on fishermen from the Indonesian island of Roti. *From Korea With Love*, directed by Jennifer Cummins and produced by Jessica Douglas-Henry and Christopher Thorburn, follows the efforts of an Australian couple to adopt a child from Korea. Produced by Ellenor Cox and directed by Liz Thompson, *Breaking Bows and Arrows* (picture below) looks at a broken community on Bougainville turning to tradition to heal the rifts caused by a decade of armed conflict. *Surviving Shepherd's Pie*, produced by Franziska Wagenfeld and directed by Diana Leach, is a testimony to the not-so-ordinary women who have chosen to live in an extraordinary environment—the harsh Australian outback.



Sales highlights

A new international catalogue featuring Film Australia's latest documentaries was presented to buyers at MIPTV and MIPDOC in Cannes in April. The market was the company's busiest in recent years.

Meanwhile, Discovery International has licensed *Thomson of Arnhem Land* for pay TV in its Pacific Rim territories, including Australia and New Zealand, and *A Bird in the Hand* for Europe and Africa.

Welcome to the Waks Family has been licensed to NIK Media in the Netherlands, YLE in Finland and Danmarks Radio TV in Denmark. *In the Realm of the Hackers* has been licensed to SVT in Sweden and YLE Finland, with the latter network also licensing *Ordinary People* and *Holy Rollers*. *Spellbinder I* and *II* have been licensed to TMC for pay TV in France and Monaco.

Through Film Australia's Canadian agent Sextant, *Fortress Australia*, *The Raid and Long Tan—The True Story* have been licensed to the History Channel and *The Valley Between* to the Knowledge Network. *Spellbinder I* and *II* have been licensed to TVO for free-to-air television.

The Valley Between (also known as *Sun on the Stubble*) has been licensed for home video to BFS Entertainment in the US and the three-part series *Federation* to the History Channel for the US, Mexico and Canada.

Family has been licensed to Shanghai Television in China, who will also broadcast *A Compassionate Rage* to coincide with its screening at the Shanghai Television Festival.

In Australia, pay TV channel Odyssey has licensed 13 episodes of the Australian Biography series. Also included in the package are *Doc—A Portrait of Herbert Vere Evatt*, *Baby Boomers Picture Show*, *Red Ted and the Great Depression*, *Who Killed Malcolm Smith?* and *The Post*.



In brief

- Philip Saggars (pictured above) has taken up the newly created Film Australia position of Director, Corporate Management. Philip is responsible for managing the company's statutory and contractual obligations. He has previously undertaken a number of short-term legal and management projects for Film Australia. Philip practised as a solicitor in the areas of commercial and corporate law for many years, most recently for Blake Dawson Waldron, Mail TV and Sydney Airport. He has wide experience in corporate legal, company secretarial and business affairs areas, principally in media and communications organisations including the Seven Network and Optus Vision.

- A new wireless internet link mast is being connected at Film Australia. All staff, tenants, productions, editors and studio clients will be able to access high-speed, always-on internet access without phone line fees and dial-up charges, and postproduction tenants can use the broadband capabilities of the link to send and receive video and data files quickly and easily to other post-production facilities nationally and internationally.

- Executive Producer Anna Grieve recently met with broadcasters in Amsterdam and London and attended Hot Docs in Canada, one of the premiere international events for documentary.

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www.filmaust.com.au

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ABN 19 008 639 316

Real2Reel is published quarterly by
Film Australia.

ISSN 0819 6306

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real2reel



The birth of a new nation state is not an everyday occurrence. And while human history is rich with written eyewitness accounts of the rise and fall of civilisations, only in recent times have we had the capacity to capture the emergence of a nation on film...

Sometimes when we talk about democracy, nationhood and independence, we forget that grand principles often demand grand sacrifices. *Rosa's Story* reveals how high the stakes can be.

— Senator Richard Alston at the launch of the series *East Timor—Birth of a Nation*



A nation is born

Senator Richard Alston, Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, officially launched the two-part series *East Timor—Birth of a Nation* at the Real: Life on Film Documentary Festival in Melbourne on 7 May 2002.

One episode, *Rosa's Story*, was screened to an audience of 250 festival goers and invited guests. Earlier, it won the SBS Award for the Promotion of Cultural Diversity through Film, awarded for Outstanding Achievement in Documentary. Producers Stella Zammataro and Luigi Acquisto donated the cash prize of \$2000 to the Rosa Martins Education Trust Fund.

Rosa Martins is a young widow living in Dili. This documentary follows her struggles to rebuild her life and reunite her family of six children in the aftermath of East Timor's independence.

Lu Olo's Story, the second episode of the series, looks at how a resistance soldier, Francisco "Lu Olo" Guterres, makes the difficult transition to political leader as new president of the Fretilin party.

The series is a Film Australia National Interest Program, developed with the assistance of Film Victoria and produced in association with Abracadabra Film and Television Productions with the assistance of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. It was directed by Luigi Acquisto and Andrew Sully and narrated by Cate Blanchett. Franco di Chiera is executive producer.

East Timor—Birth of a Nation was broadcast nationally on 23 and 30 May on ABC-TV following the official declaration of



East Timor's independence on 20 May. A website at www.abc.net.au/etimor has been co-produced by the ABC and Film Australia, in association with Abracadabra Films.

The series was also included in the inaugural East Timor Human Rights Documentary Film Festival, along with an earlier Film Australia program, *The Diplomat*. The festival was held in conjunction with nationwide independence celebrations and attracted audiences of over 3000 people each night during its season in Dili.

Another Film Australia National Interest Program also had its world premiere screening at the Real festival. *Welcome to the Waks Family* was launched on 6 May to a full house and won the Real: Life on Film Award for Excellence in Documentary Filmmaking.

Directed and produced by Barbara Chobocky, the film introduces audiences to one of the largest families in Australia—17 children to the same two parents, all raised within an orthodox Jewish community.

The program was produced in association with Documentary Films Pty Ltd and SBS Independent. Rod Freedman was co-producer and Franco di Chiera executive producer.

Other Film Australia titles that screened at Real were *Staying Out*, *Ordinary People* and *Stranger in My Skin—Ray Cotti* and *Jetja Nai Medical Mob—Naomi Mayers* from the *Everyday Brave* series. The festival toured to Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Perth.

Stella Zammataro and Luigi Acquisto (left) at the launch of *East Timor—Birth of a Nation* by Senator Richard Alston (centre). Rod Freedman and Barbara Chobocky (right) at the launch of *Welcome to the Waks Family*.





Festivals & Awards

At the Film Critics Circle of Australia Awards held on 22 February, *Facing the Music* won Best Australian Documentary. *Our Brother James* and *The Diplomat* were finalists.

Written and directed by Jessica Douglas-Henry, *Our Brother James* was also nominated for the Script Writing Award at the NSW Premier's Literary Awards on 27 May.

Facing the Music was a finalist in the Best Long-Form Documentary section of the ATOM Awards on 25 May, and the *Everyday Brave* series was nominated in the Best Indigenous Resource section.

Everyday Brave won the award for Best Television Series at the Tudawali Film and Video Awards, which recognise Indigenous achievement within the Australian film and television industry. An episode from the series, *For Who I Am–Bonita Mabo*, was included in Mabo Day 10th anniversary celebrations in Melbourne on 3 June along with *Mabo–Life of an Island Man* and *Mabo–The Native Title Revolution* CD-Rom.

Two episodes from the series will screen at the Brisbane International Film Festival in July: *Stranger in My Skin–Ray Cotti* and *Media Nomads–The Thaiday Brothers*. *Welcome to the Waks Family* has also been selected.

At the DoubleTake Documentary Film Festival held in April in the USA, *Facing the Music* won the White House Project Women and Leadership Award and *Cunnamulla* won the Roland House Award for Outstanding Editing. *Cunnamulla* also screened in April at the Norwegian Documentary Festival and *Facing the Music* screened in competition at It's All True–International Documentary Film Festival in Brazil.

The *Selling Australia* series won a Certificate of Merit in the Educational/Documentary section at the Chicago International Television Competition.

Ten Million Wildcats has won the Relationship Between Man and Animal Prize and was nominated for Best Scientific Film at the Festival International du Film Animalier d'Albert in France. The program was recently awarded the Third Place Certificate for Creative Excellence at the US International Film and Video Festival.

Film Australia programs will again feature strongly in this year's Sydney Film Festival. *The Trouble with Merle*, which unravels the myths surrounding 1930s screen legend Merle Oberon (left), will have its premiere screening at the State Theatre on 13 June. *In the Realm of the Hackers* will premiere on 9 June at Dendy Quays (see story page 3) and excerpts from a number of films from the company's archives will be included in a special presentation on the outback. The Film Australia distribution title *Troubled Waters* is a finalist in the Documentary Category at the Dendy Awards; *Ordinary People* was highly commended and *Staying Out* was commended.

Fortress Australia will have its world premiere screening at the Melbourne International Film Festival, which runs from 23 July to 11 August. *A Compassionate Rage* will be included in the Shanghai Television Festival in China.

In June, the classic Film Australia documentary *Antarctic Pioneers* (1962) will feature in The Longest Night Film Festival in Tasmania along with the Phillip Law profile from the *Australian Biography*.

In Pre-production

Australian Biography Series 9

The *Australian Biography* series, which screens on SBS-TV, profiles some of the most extraordinary Australians of our time. This ninth series is being produced and directed by Rod Freedman, with Robin Hughes as interviewer and writer. Research is underway into potential interviewees.
Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

Law and Order

Pre-production has started in Yirrkala in the Northern Territory for this one-hour documentary for ABC-TV. Produced by Denise Haslem and Rose Hesp and directed by Trevor Graham, it will look at how Australia's legal system has failed to deal with the complexities of crime and social issues in Indigenous communities.
Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

Slow Food

In this one-hour program for SBS, producer Carmelo Musca, director Carlo Buralli and writer Gabriella Pignatelli will explore an international eco-gastronomic movement that champions traditional foods, social awareness, biodiversity and sensual pleasure. Filming will take place in Mexico, Italy and Australia. The program is being developed with the assistance of Film Victoria.
Executive Producer: Franco di Chiera

In Production

Fearless–Stories from Asian Women

This four-part series for SBS examines the experiences of four women from different cultures fighting for social justice. Principal photography for the first three episodes is complete with filming for the fourth episode due to begin in July. Produced by Samantha Kelley and Peter du Cane and directed by du Cane and Mathew Kelley, the series was developed and produced with the assistance of ScreenWest.
Executive Producer: Franco di Chiera

Human Contraptions

Animation is well underway on the second half of this series from Oscar-winning animator Bruce Petty and producer Deborah Szapiro. The ten five-minute episodes, to be screened on ABC-TV, will take us on a journey through the inner mechanics of the "contraptions" that shape our lives.
Executive Producers: Stefan Moore, Anna Grieve

Reef Doctors

This one-hour program follows a small team of marine scientists in their race to discover why parts of the Great Barrier Reef are dying. With principal photography completed in Queensland, post-production is due to start in early June. Produced by Tony Wright and Stuart Menzies and co-produced and directed by Sally Ingleton, the program has been developed with the assistance of Film Victoria and the Australian Film Commission. It will screen on SBS-TV.

Executive Producer: Franco di Chiera

Ted's Evolution

This one-hour documentary for ABC-TV follows Australian scientist Ted Steele as he takes on the establishment in a battle that could revolutionise how we view the world. Principal photography has begun overseas with the crew travelling to London, Paris and Toronto. David Noakes is producing; Lou Petho is producing and directing.
Executive Producer: Franco di Chiera

Under One Roof

Principal photography has begun on the first episode of this series, which will reveal the secret life of contemporary Australian families. The Chakos family has been filmed celebrating Greek Orthodox Easter and a traditional Greek christening. Research is underway to locate a family for the second episode. Produced by Rosemary Blight and directed by Kay Pavlou, the series will screen on SBS-TV.
Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

In Post-production

Film Australia's Outback DVD

Produced and directed by Denise Haslem, this extensive multimedia production includes some of the nation's most acclaimed documentaries from the early 20th century until today, as well as behind-the-scenes information and educational materials. Interviews have been conducted with filmmakers Dean Semler, Ian Dunlop and Lee Robinson among others.
Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

Plumpton High Babies

This program for ABC-TV follows a year in the lives of a group of schoolgirl mothers. Originally intended as a one-hour documentary, it has been re-formatted into a four-part series. Producer Julian Russell is currently editing the series at Film Australia. Aviva Ziegler is director.
Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn



Above: (l to r) *In the Realm of Hackers* writer/director Kevin Anderson and producer John Moore

In the Realm of the Hackers

In 1989, two Melbourne teenagers known as Electron and Phoenix stole a restricted computer security list and used it to break into some of the world's most classified and supposedly secure computer systems.

So fast and widespread was the attack, no-one could work out how it had happened—until one of the hackers called *The New York Times* to brag. Ten years after their arrest, a new dramatised documentary uncovers not only how they did it but why.

In the Realm of the Hackers is a one-hour production made under the Film Australia National Interest Program in association with John Moore Productions. The program was developed with the assistance of Film Victoria and produced with the assistance of Film Victoria and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Franco di Chiera is executive producer with John Moore producing.

The story represents a number of "firsts", explains writer/director Kevin Anderson. "It deals with the first computer crime case to be prosecuted in Australia, the introduction of federal computer crime laws, the establishment of a computer crime unit within the Australian Federal Police, and the first time computer data had been recorded and used as evidence in Australia."

"There were also some interesting themes in the story to do with teenage disaffection and empowerment, addiction and criminality, as well as the accelerating role of technology in our lives and the ways we deal with it."

In the Realm of the Hackers shows the role that computer hackers played in the development of the internet in Australia and how they were responsible for the creation of the computer security industry.

In keeping with the secretive nature of the underground, Anderson spent three years having a series of "cloak-and-dagger" meetings—on street corners at night, in cars and cafes, but never in anyone's home or office. Emails flew back and forth. "For me it all helped to create the smoky ambience of the computer underground and those associated with it," recalls Anderson.

Attempts were made to contact both Electron and Phoenix, initially without success. But, after more than a year of trying, Anderson and Electron finally met.

Before agreeing to participate in the documentary, however, Electron stressed that his identity had to be protected. Initially he was not happy to be interviewed on camera at all but eventually he agreed, as long as his face and voice were disguised.

"Since his arrest for hacking and subsequent period of mental illness, Electron has slowly managed to rebuild his life and become a productive member of society, working in the IT industry today. As such he was reluctant to reveal his true identity on national television," Anderson explains.

"However, after filming a test, we felt that the disguise would militate against audience involvement in the character. It was decided to use an actor to play Electron, both in the dramatic reconstructions and in the interview situation. The text for the interview would come directly from an interview we did with Electron, so the actor would be speaking Electron's actual words."

The result is a film that vividly recreates the climate of the 1980s, taking the viewer headlong into the clandestine, risky but intoxicating world of the computer underground.

In the Realm of the Hackers will screen on ABC-TV. It will premiere at the Sydney Film Festival at Dendy Quays on 9 June and has been selected to screen at REvelation Perth International Film Festival, held 20–20 June.

Robin Anderson

Robin Anderson was one of Australia's leading documentary makers. She died in Sydney on 8 March 2002 at the age of 51, following a short battle with cancer.

Robin held an honours degree in economics from the University of Western Australia and a masters degree in sociology from Columbia University. After two years in New York, she took a job as a researcher at ABC television, where she first teamed up with Bob Connolly.

Robin and Bob made five feature-length documentaries together as independent filmmakers. All were released theatrically in Australia and screened around the world to great acclaim. Their most recent production was *Facing the Music* (2001) which followed *Rats in the Ranks* (1996). They are renowned internationally for their remarkable Highlands Trilogy, set in Papua New Guinea: the Oscar-nominated *First Contact* (1982), *Joe Leahy's Neighbours* (1989) and *Black Harvest* (1992).

They have won more than 50 awards for their work, including the Byron Kennedy Award in 1992 for outstanding contribution to Australia filmmaking and the Film Australia Living Legend Award at the If Awards last November.

"The films that Robin made with Bob will be around to inspire documentary filmmakers forever," said Film Australia Chief Executive Officer, Sharon Connolly. "But Robin's commitment to excellence, her fierce intelligence and her determination will also remain as standards to which we might all aspire. We at Film Australia have been privileged to work with her."

Robin is survived by her partner Bob Connolly and their children Katherine and Joanna.

Below: Robin Anderson and Bob Connolly filming *Rats in the Ranks*

